FEBRUARY 1990

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat
Incorporated.

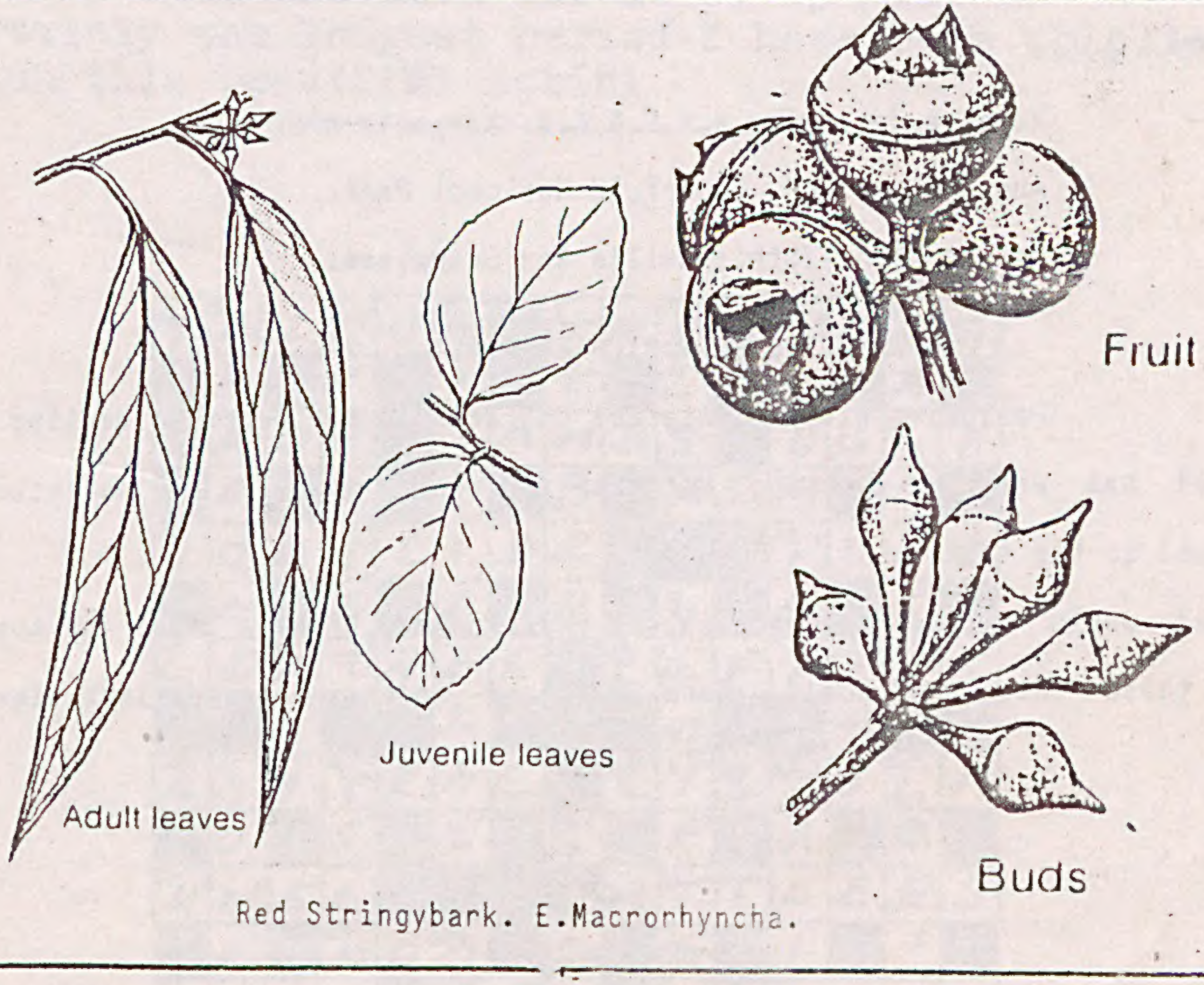
EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting : Feb. 2nd. Mr. R. Hately: Eucalypts.

Meeting : Mar. 2nd. A.G.M. Members Night.

Excursion : Feb. 4th. Angair Forest Park - M.White.

Excursion : Mar. 4th. Sailors and Spring Creeks, Hepburn Springs.



Red Stringybark. E.Macrorhyncha.

President;	Dr.F.Harrap	Ph. 053 301651
Vice Pres.	Miss H.Burgess	312210
Secretary:	Mr.G.Binns	332782
Treasurer:	Mrs.F.Williamson	327631
Editor:	Mr.A.Barlow	413378

Meetings as specified are held at the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street Sth., Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m. EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, cnr. STURT AND ARMSTRONG STS., BALLARAT, at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTINGS OR AT 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Feb. 4th. Excursion to Angair Forest Park with Mary White. The morning meeting place will be at the G.Ocean Rd.- Point Addis Rd. junction, on the Torquay side of Anglesea. The rendezvous will be approx. 50 metres along the Pt. Addis Rd., right hand side.

Feb 19th. 8p.m. Committee meeting at the Barlow's; 2119, Geelong Rd., Mt. Helen. Ph.41378.

March 4th. Excursion to Sailor's Creek and Spring Creek, Hepburn Springs. (full day).

March 9th.-12th. Combined W.V.F.N.C.A./V.F.N.C.A. Camp out at Ingamels Camp, Ocean Grove. Details were provided at Dec. meeting. Booking sheets and and programmes are now available. Contact person; Dick Southcombe, Ph. 052-433916.

Advance dates for W.V.F.N.C.A. Campouts are;
Aug.31-Sept.2nd. Wyperfeld National Park.
October26th.-28th.; Hall's Gap Grampians.

INVITATION FROM MICHAEL HEALY.

Following his presentation on Ferns at our December meeting Michael has written inviting members to visit and view his collection as a sequel to his talk.

Michael would welcome members either individually or as a group and suggests that those interested could phone him and arrange a convenient time.

Ph. 32-1275.

Blackwood Excursion December 3rd 1989

The Wildflowers in the Wambat State Forrest have been particularly good in late 1989 and we stopped initially along Nolans Creek track in a good area for plants. There were xtensive mats of the dainty Rosy Heath-Myrtle (Baeckea ramosissima) and clumps of Dwarf Boronia (Boronia nana) as well as the white form of the Common Heath (Epacris impressa)

The day was partly overcast which limited our views of birds. Numbers of rufous fantails have been unusually low this Summer along the Lerderderg River just west of Blackwood; we had just one fleeting glimpse of this delightful migrant in native Hazels off the Stockyard Track.

We were much more fortunate with a male rose robin at Nolans Creek picnic area. The bird stayed in view either perched in Blackwood (Acacia melanoxylin) or in low growth along the creek.

We watched the bird for about 25 minutes - certainly the longest period I have been able to watch this beautiful Robin.

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Solution to Crossword 17.

FERNS. Speaker Mike Healy. A Fern Grower.

Mike started growin orchids and found that the ferns grew well with the orchids. He first lived in Melbourne but came to Ballarat Where he has a large block with a 40 by 30 Glass house, although many of his ferns grow outside, his interest has led him to many areas in Victoria and N.S.W. In the Otway ranges there is a wonderland of ferns (and leeches). In the Ballarat region , which is not the most ideal place for ferns, there are few places where ferns are found, in someof the old mine shaftsferns are found particularly in Creswick

There are approximately 12,000 species World wide, with 850 growing in Australia and 118 found in Victoris.

What is a Fern? Broadly speaking, it is a green plant with stem roots and leaves. The stem (rhizome) is frequently underground and may be much reduced; it bears the leaves (fronds) and numerous wiry roots. An important feature of ferns is the presence of protective scales or hairs on the growing tips of the stems. New fronds. including each leafletin divided leaves are tightly coiled; this coiling of the young leaf is almost unique to ferns and is a useful characteristic. The coiled frond is called a crozier or fiddlehead.

Many plants are easily recognised as ferns by their soft, much divided fronds; others with coarse leaves undivided, are not easily identified. On the underside of the fronds,in some cases special fronds, there are yellow or brown dots or lines which, at first glance,,could be mistaken for "rust" which is a fungal growth.

Through a hand lens, each of these brown patches consist of a group of almost globular structures called sporangia. Each sporangium or spore sac, contains powder like spores. A group or patch of sporangia is called a sorus and the shape and position of the sori help to place ferns in their families. The plant with which we are familiar bears these structures and is called a sporophyte.

Cultivation:

To grow ferns successfully, it is necessary to provide conditions as near as possible to their natural habitat. Careful observation is the order of the day and the best guide to success.

Ferns growing in forest areas are more hardy than those in deep, wet gullies or rainforests.

Some ferns, particularly those with vigorous creeping rhizomes are useful in starting a fernery but may grow to robustly, even to the point of being a nuisance. The more tender species need deeper shade, kept out of drying winds and a richer, coarse, gritty mountain soil with plenty of mulch.

In containers a well drained open medium soil with enough nutrients to sustain a healthy growth is necessary, ferns which grow in limestone areas will need some addiional lime (limestone or shell grit will do).

In the ground, ferns need an open porous soil topped with about 10 cm of mulch. In clay it is advisable to break down the clay.

Summer watering is necessary, a good soaking rather than hand watering.

Ferns need shade from the midday and afternoon sun. Most hardy ferns tolerate and even benefit from moderate sunshine. Protection from wind is essential.

Sucking insects cause poor growth distortion of foliage and bleached spots the usual sprays at half strength will suffice, even soapy water will control scale and thrip.

Slugs and snails thrive around ferns and garden pellets will control them.

Old fern fronds should be removed and burnt to keep down vine-hoppers.

Now for some super ferns, after all this information (ed).

L.F.

Field Reports December meeting

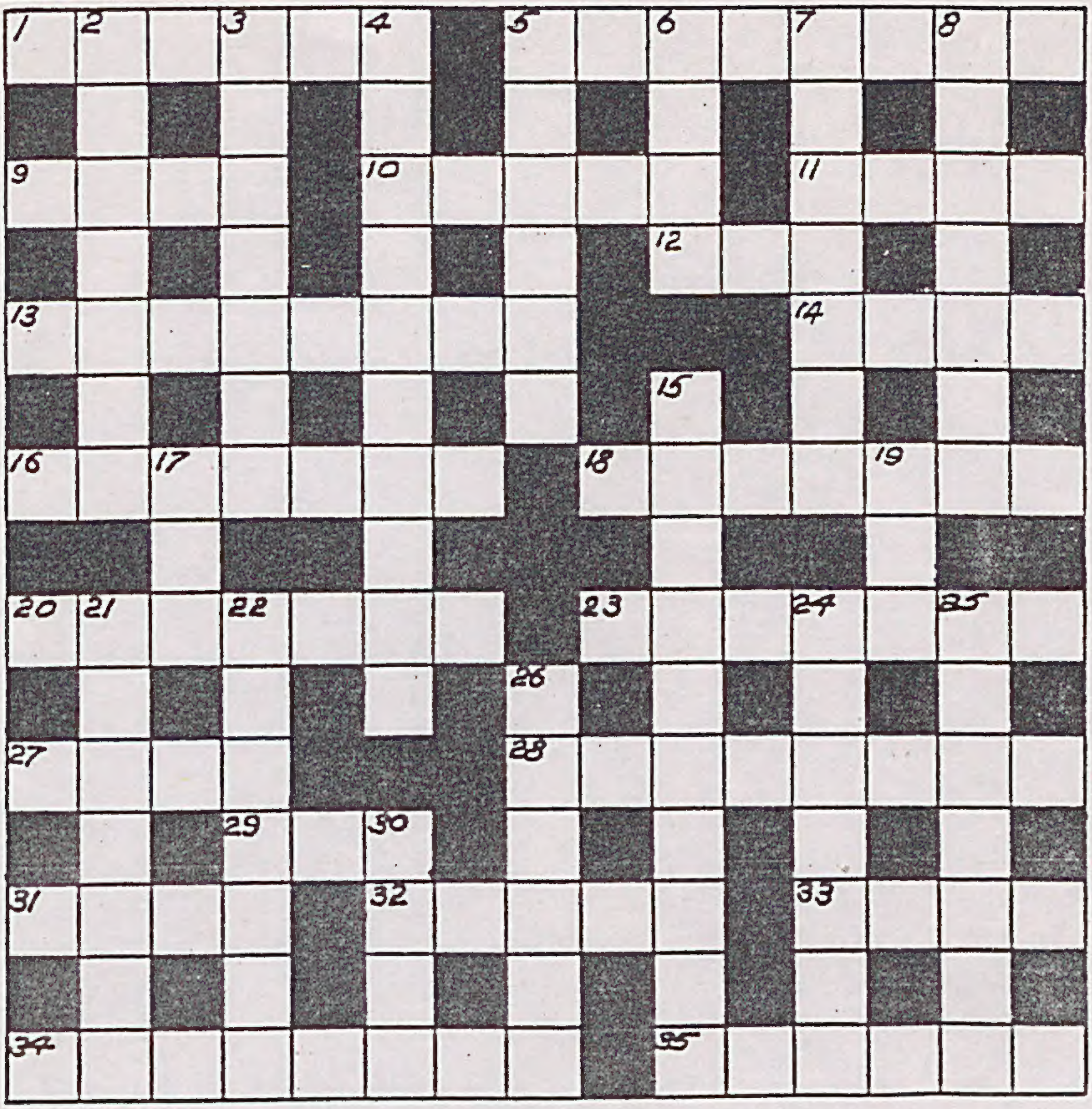
A. Morrison	At Langi Gheran, Peregrine Falcons have reared two young; at Pt. Edwards men were observed netting Whiting and Stingrays. The latter were clubbed to death.
F. Williamson	Echidna observed near Mt. Prospect te tennis courts. (A budding McEnroe.)
L. Fink.	Echidna in Fiskin Rd Mt. Helen.
K. McDonnell	At Invermay; Mudlarks have reared two young, after two unsuccessful attempts due to unsuitable weather; Grey Fantail with three young; Grey Shrike Thrush with one young; Currawongs and Kookaburras also nesting.
F. Harrap	At Wombat Forrest, a native Marsupial Rat. Anchor Plants at Snizort- all surviving to date.
H. Burgess	Water Rat at Lake Wendouree at dusk. Pelican at Narmbool.

"TREE VICTORIA" - Grant for F.N.C.B.

We have been advised by the Minister for C.F.and L., Kay Setches, that our application, for a grant for the purpose of protection of the vegetation on Linton Flora and Fauna Reserve, has been successful.

The grant, totalling $4,200, will be used to refence the boundariesof the Reserve where the fencing is badly decayed or non-existent.

The trustees of the block, The Victorian Conservation Trust, are keen for the Reserve to be protected as a sanctuary as it is an excellent patch of remnant vegetation. The "Tree Victoria" grant will provide much needed protection. More details will be available to members as the project management plan develops.



Natural History Crosswoed No.18 by Tantalus.

Across.

1 Like fish (or mountains sometimes!) (6) 5 Type of rose.(8) 9 Pierce with knife (4) 10 Tiger country! (5) 11 Blood sucking Acarid (4) 12 Landed (3) 13 Conifers (3,5) 14 Consumed(4) 16 Hot air current(7) 18 Voice of particular owl(7) 20 Small biting insects(3,4) 23 Brer Wolf failed with this(3,4) 27 Mineral used as glass(4) 28 Some think we should -------- all captive fauna(8) 29 Dark red resin(3) 31 Extinct bird(4) 32 Hawks do(5) 33 Holly(4) 34 Echidna is one(8) 35 Elephants are very ------(5)

Down

2 Of Family Siluridae(7) 3 Large crustacean(7) 4 Insects with licences?(6,4) 5 Salad vegetable(6) 6 Grain ground to powder(4) 7 Salad leaf(7) 8 The 'N' in DNA stands for this(7). 15 Albatrosses are(5.5) 17 Tail(3) 19 Period of historic time(3) 21 Animal which lives on the surface of another(7) 22 Ear shaped marine mollusc(7) 24 Great ---- Reef(7) 25 Marsh bird of Heron family(7) 26 Good food for ruminants(6) 30 Talkative Bird?(4)

Botanical Notes :-

FAMILY PITTOSPORACEAE

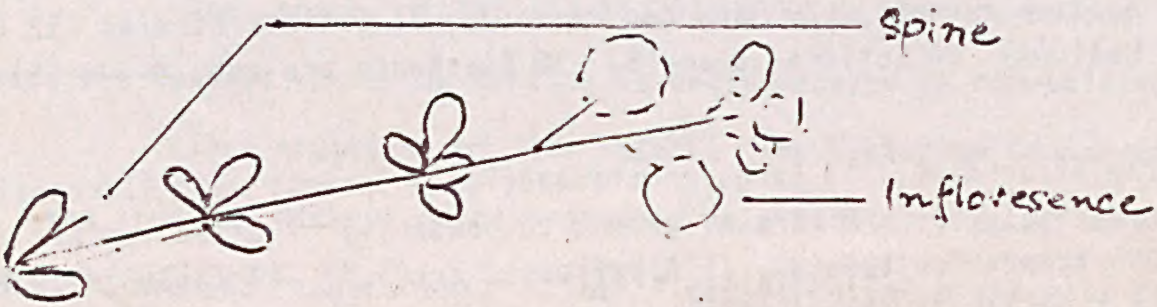
Several trees of Bursaria spinosa (Sweet Bursaria) are flowering profusely at Brown Hill. So ! we turn our attention to another family - PITTOSPORACEAE, most of the members of which are restricted to Australasia.

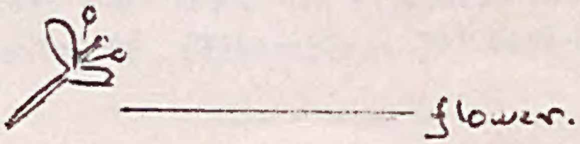
The name comes from the genus Pittosporum in which the seed (spora) is enveloped in a sticky pulp (Greek-pitta = resin) Pittosporum is the largest genus with about 150 species and is found also in SE Asia and Africa. Two species from New Zealand are often used as hedge plants.

Only two of the nine genera are found in the Ballarat area - Billardiera (named after a French Botanist who visited Tasmania and Western Australia in 1792-3) and Buraaria (named after " bursa " - Latin for a pouch, because the fruit, a capsule, resembles a pouch)

The Bursarias are small trees or shrubs, the branches and branchlets often with spines. The leaves are alternate or clustered. The flowers are numerous, often in clusters. There are 5 sepals and 5 white petals. The sepals may be deciduous. The lowers are regular - actinomorphic. The fruit is a flat, two locular capsule. The seeds are kidney-shaped and there are 1-3 in each loculus.

Billardiera scandens (Common Apple-berry) is a wide-spread creeper with green, yellow-brown or reddish berries.





H.H.